

CITY OF MUSKEGON
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA) /
BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (BRA)
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

July 14, 2020

Chairperson M. Bottomley called the meeting to order at 10:30 AM and roll was taken.

MEMBERS PRESENT: M. Bottomley, M. Kleaveland, H. Sytsema, J. Wallace Jr, D. Pollock, B. Hastings, J. Moore, M. Johnson, F. Peterson

MEMBERS ABSENT: F. DePung, D. Kalisz, J. Riegler

STAFF PRESENT: P. Wills, Director of Strategic Initiatives; D. Alexander, Downtown Manager; L. Mikesell, Director of Development Services; J. Eckholm, Economic Development Director; D. Renkenberger, Administrative Assistant; R. Cummins, Administrative Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT: None

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BUSINESS

Because there was not yet a quorum present to vote on BRA business, the DDA items were discussed first, as they did not require a vote.

DDA Budget D. Alexander updated board members on the DDA's expected discretionary funds available for the coming year and asked for ideas on how to use those funds. Board members asked about helping downtown businesses. D. Alexander stated that, considering the relatively small amount of funds available and the large number of downtown businesses, the money would not go a long way. M. Johnson asked if the businesses were being notified of grant opportunities. D. Alexander stated that he had been doing that via social media and an e-mail list. He asked that board members give it some thought for discussion at a future meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of May 12, 2020 was made by J. Moore, supported by B. Hastings and unanimously approved.

F. Peterson and J. Moore arrived, making a quorum.

BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BUSINESS

L. Mikesell introduced P. Wills as the new staff liaison to the BRA for Brownfield matters.

Infill Housing Project – P. Wills discussed a proposed amendment to the Infill Housing Project Brownfield plan amendment, originally approved by the BRA in April of 2019. Staff would like to

add additional parcels to the Plan, primarily located within the Nelson and Jackson Hill Neighborhoods. Activities include the redevelopment and/or rehabilitation of subject parcels, construction of new residential units, demolition of the former Froebel School in order to develop the property with residential units, and public infrastructure at the former Farmer's Market site to add residential units. The list of properties included 107 eligible parcels, with some of those being split resulting in 239 parcels for redevelopment. M. Franzak had also been working on this amendment. He requested that the parcel at 1251 8th St. be added to the list of properties that had been provided in the meeting packet. The property was just over an acre in size and would be divided to allow an estimated 10 more homes. Staff provided information on the financial aspects of the Plan and answered board members' questions. J. Moore asked if Froebel School was going to be torn down. M. Franzak stated that it could be demolished or rehabbed, there was not a firm plan in place yet. He stated that the city had been in contact with several developers who would be working on the projects. They were listed in the "Eligible Property Information Chart" which was provided in board members' meeting packet, and he discussed the financial information from the chart. The seller concessions were now referred to as the "cost of sale", and the amount had increased from \$15,000 per unit to \$20,000. An estimated 40-45 homes were planned for the former Farmer's Market site, and public infrastructure was also added as a reimbursable cost. H. Sytsema asked if the single-family homes being built by the developers would be available for sale to the general public. M. Franzak stated that he wasn't sure if all of them would be, as some developers may be interested in doing some rental units. Multi-family homes and townhomes were also a possibility, and the Nelson Neighborhood had been previously rezoned to allow those. H. Sytsema asked if there was a plan to ensure affordable housing to fill a gap in the community. F. Peterson stated that the Brownfield process would help make the homes more affordable. D. Dusendang would also be setting aside housing for low income homeowners. M. Kleaveland asked if the Plan could be imposed on other property owners. M. Franzak stated that City or the County Land Bank owned all properties in question. B. Hastings asked what figure the city used to define "low income". F. Peterson stated that MSHDA had a matrix showing income by family size, and the city would follow that. J. Moore asked if the city would be speaking to neighbors before any development took place. M. Franzak stated that all proposed development was allowed by the zoning ordinance. J. Moore asked if anything other than homes would be included, such as grocery stores. M. Franzak stated that they were a part of the plan but more foot traffic was needed first. F. Peterson explained that density was needed to attract stores and to help drive down the cost of construction. H. Sytsema asked if there was a timeline for construction to start, and if there was a plan on what the homes would look like. F. Peterson stated that there were 4 developers involved and all were individually multi-phased so it was hard to say which lots would be built on first, although some could be started this year.

A motion to approve the resolution approving the Brownfield Plan Amendment for the city's Infill Housing Project (1st Amendment) including the parcel at 1251 8th St, and to request that a public hearing be held before the Muskegon City Commission to consider adoption of the plan, was made by M. Kleaveland, supported by M. Johnson and unanimously approved, with M. Bottomley, M. Kleaveland, H. Sytsema, J. Wallace Jr, D. Pollock, B. Hastings, J. Moore, M. Johnson, and F. Peterson voting aye.

OTHER

Resignation of Board Vice Chairperson – M. Bottomley stated that board member and Vice Chairperson P. Edbrooke resigned, so nominations were needed for Vice Chair. A motion to nominate B. Hastings for Vice Chair was made by H. Sytsema, supported by J. Moore and unanimously approved.

Downtown Report

D. Alexander reported on the status of downtown businesses, which were slowly working out of post-COVID-19 shutdown. Restaurants, drinking establishments and retailers were opening under state guidelines put in place by the governor's orders. The biggest effort had been getting restaurants and drinking establishments open in a sustainable, profitable manner. Efforts include outdoor seating, closing of streets and expanding alcohol service areas. The governor approved Social District legislation allowing consumption of alcohol from bars and restaurants outside their service area, and the city was working on a plan to present to the city commission for their approval. It would then require approval by the Michigan Liquor Control Commission. City staff planned to confer with potential establishments within the downtown Social District to put a plan together. It would also be an important tool to help market downtown events as they return.

M. Bottomley asked about the development of the property near Hartshorn Marina and the former Shaw Walker factory building. D. Alexander stated that the Brownfield plan for the Hartshorn Marina properties had been approved, and West Urban Developers were anticipating the first unit to be under construction soon. Roads and utilities were ready to go. J. Eckholm stated that he had recently met with Moses Gross, owner of the Watermark property, regarding completion of development on the property. He had planned to sell it but had recently expressed interest in keeping it.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:40 AM.